

Camp Russell, Va

Dec 16th 1864

Dear Mother & Brother,

I *recieved* your very welcome letter yesterday and was very glad to hear that you were improving and hope you will soon be able to go home. I should like to go myself for this is about as lonesome a place as I have been in for a long time.

There has been some talk about our getting furloughs this winter but I don't think we will get ~~any~~ home before next September.

We have been having some very cold weather for a few days past but it is quite warm now, one of the 8th Vermont froze to death while on the outpost picket a few nights ago. I tell you it is tedious to be on picket such nights as these.

I think I will get rid of doing duty in the company this winter, for I have been helping the adjutant for a few days and he told me to day that he would have me detailed for his clerk. So I will be all sound for a winter job. Jimmy Dunn is in Winchester clerking for Dr Wagner, he is having a soft time of it as usual. A great many have returned to the Regt. that were wounded at the Winchester fight, the two Loomis boys Blakeman Lau[?]iore, Horrigan Hase, and Crandall of our co have returned, our co is the largest co in the Regt. now, we number 33 men, the regt. numbers 211. We have had a good many recruits and all the detailed man were ordered back after the Cedar Creek fight.

Last night after dark our brigade was ordered out to hear an official dispatch read from Gen. Thomas. Gen. Dwight made us a short speech after it was read, there was a salute of one hundred guns fired here yesterday. Thomas and Sherman are doing "big things" and I hope they will continue to do so [CO] and it will not take long to wind this thing up. I think the Army of the Valley have done their *their* share towards it and now let the rest of them make a strike, and we will roast our shins by our fire places.

Jerry says he sent your descriptive list to you at nearly two weeks ago.

The coat that you packed in that box at New Orleans came about a week ago. I have got it and if I had any chance to send it to you, I would do so, but there is no way that I know of to send it. Seargt. Warner is here and well and sends his respects to you. [CO]

All the boys send their respects to you, this from your Brother,
John F. Brand